

AUSAs: Jared D. Hoffman, Benjamin L. Levander

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

24 mj 902

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

JERU BASKET, a/k/a "Wowly,"

Defendant.

SEALED COMPLAINT

Violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)

COUNTY OF OFFENSE:
WESTCHESTER

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK, ss.:

KARMA M. SMITH, being duly sworn, deposes and says that she is a Special Agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI"), and charges as follows:

COUNT ONE

(Possession of a Firearm After a Felony Conviction)

1. On or about March 1, 2024, in the Southern District of New York and elsewhere, JERU BASKET, a/k/a "Wowly," the defendant, knowing he had previously been convicted in a court of a crime punishable by imprisonment for a term exceeding one year, knowingly possessed a firearm, to wit, an imported semi-automatic firearm manufactured by the Burgu Metal Company, Turkey, and the firearm was in and affecting commerce.

(Title 18, United States Code, Section 922(g)(1).)

The bases for my knowledge and for the foregoing charge are, in part, as follows:

2. I have been a Special Agent with the FBI since approximately 2002. During my tenure with the FBI, I have been involved in the investigation of numerous firearms cases. I have been personally involved in the investigation of this matter.

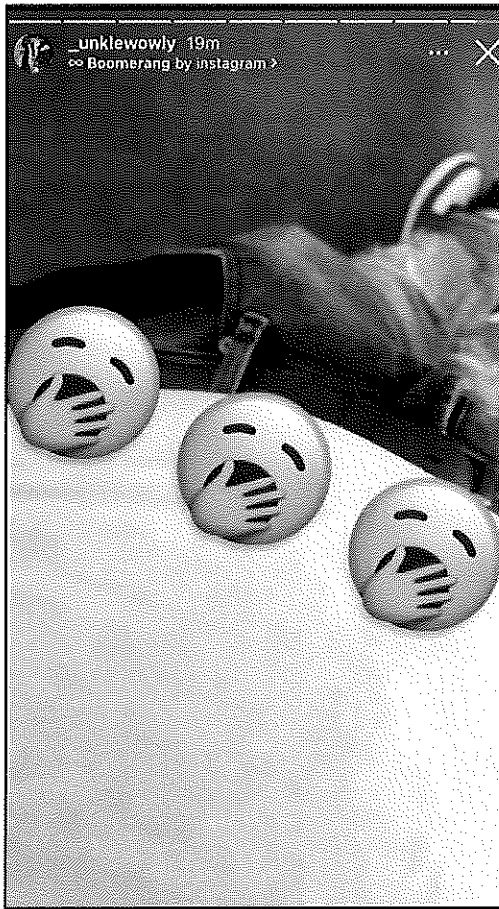
3. This affidavit is based upon my personal participation in the investigation of this matter, my conversations with law enforcement agents, and my examination of reports and records. Because this affidavit is being submitted for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause, it does not include all the facts that I have learned during the course of my investigation. Where the contents of documents and the actions, statements, and conversations of others are reported herein, they are reported in substance and in part, except where otherwise indicated.

4. Based on a conversation with a detective ("Detective-1") at the Yonkers Police Department ("YPD"), I am aware that the YPD is investigating gang-related violence occurring in or around Yonkers, New York (the "YPD Investigation"). Based on my conversations with Detective-1, I learned the following:

a. As part of the YPD Investigation, Detective-1 came to learn about an Instagram account with a username ending in “-wowly” (“Instagram Account-1”), which Detective-1 determined, based on his familiarity with the defendant, was used by the JERU BASKET, a/k/a “Wowly,” the defendant. As part of the YPD Investigation, Detective-1 had been monitoring Instagram Account-1 to collect evidence.

b. In the course of monitoring Instagram Account-1 for the YPD Investigation, Detective-1 saw numerous photographs of the defendant posted by the account. In addition, based on Detective-1’s participation in the YPD Investigation, Detective-1 knew that the defendant’s nickname is “Wowly.” That “Wowly” appears in the handle used by Instagram Account-1, is a strong indication that Instagram Account-1 was used by the defendant.

c. On or about March 1, 2024, Detective-1 observed Instagram Account-1 upload a video as an Instagram story (the “March 1 Instagram Story”) that depicted, among other things, an individual wearing ripped jeans and blue sneakers with what appeared to be a firearm in one pocket and a substantial amount of cash in the other pocket. Because Detective-1 monitored Instagram Account-1, he could determine that the March 1 Instagram Story was posted at approximately 2:44 p.m. Detective-1 recorded the March 1 Instagram Story on his iPhone, and two screenshots of the March 1 Instagram Story are depicted below:



d. Based on the March 1 Instagram Story, the YPD canvassed surveillance cameras stationed in or around Yonkers, New York, and controlled by the City of Yonkers, for evidence of the defendant.

e. At approximately 3:14 p.m.—approximately thirty minutes after the March 1 Instagram Story was posted—the Yonkers surveillance cameras captured the defendant leaving an address in Yonkers that Detective-1 knew, based on his participation in the YPD Investigation, was where the defendant resided. The defendant was wearing ripped jeans and blue sneakers that appeared identical to the ripped jeans and blue sneakers depicted in the March 1 Instagram Story, as well as a mask. In addition, the defendant appeared to adjust something in his front waistband area that was underneath his sweatshirt. A screenshot of the defendant leaving his residence as captured by the Yonkers surveillance camera is depicted below:



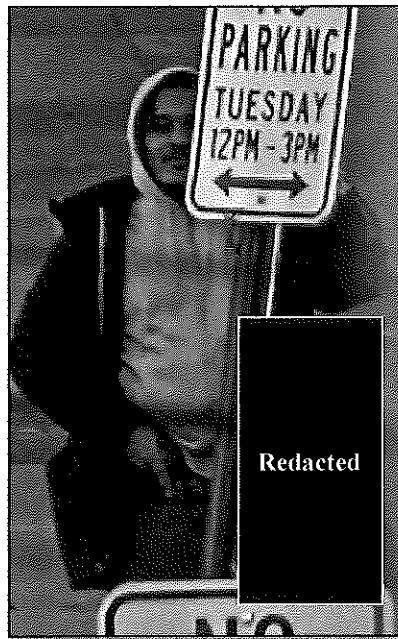
f. After observing the defendant on the surveillance video, YPD deployed approximately seven YPD officers to the area in which the defendant resided to conduct surveillance.

g. Shortly thereafter, YPD officers observed the defendant in or around the area of School 23, located in Yonkers, New York. When the defendant was first observed, he was no longer wearing a mask, and Detective-1 identified the individual in ripped jeans and blue sneakers as JERU BASKET, a/k/a “Wowly,” the defendant.

h. While some YPD officers were surveilling the defendant in person, including Detective-1, other YPD officers continued to monitor the Yonkers surveillance cameras in real time and reported to the YPD officers who were surveilling the defendant in person what

the surveillance cameras were depicting. YPD officers who were surveilling the defendant in person, including Detective-1, were also observing the surveillance cameras in real time on their cellphones. During the in-person surveillance of the defendant, the YPD officers observed the defendant adjusting his waistband and then adjust his sweatshirt to ensure it covered his entire waistband.

i. At approximately 3:46 p.m., the Yonkers surveillance cameras depicted the defendant adjusting something near his waistband with his index finger extended downward. I know, based on my experience handling firearms, that the manner in which the defendant extended his index finger is consistent with the handling of a firearm because extending your index finger in the manner depicted by the defendant keeps an individual's trigger finger away from the trigger.



j. Within five minutes of observing the defendant adjust his waistband with his index finger extended, the YPD officers who were surveilling the defendant in person approached the defendant and announced to him that they were YPD officers. The defendant appeared nervous to the YPD officers, including Detective-1. The YPD officers determined, based on the defendant's apparent possession of a firearm, that it was safest for the YPD officers, the defendant, and children located nearby to place the defendant in handcuffs.

k. After being placed in handcuffs, the defendant told Detective-1 that he had a firearm on his person. Detective-1 asked the defendant where the firearm was located, and the defendant told Detective-1 that it was located in his front waistband area. Detective-1 lifted the defendant's sweatshirt, observed a firearm, removed the firearm from the defendant's front waistband area, emptied the firearm of ammunition for safety purposes, and proceeded to pat down the defendant.

1. The firearm that was recovered from the defendant's person was an imported semi-automatic firearm manufactured by the Burgu Metal Company, Turkey, and it contained fourteen 9mm bullets, and is depicted below:



5. An interstate nexus expert with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives evaluated photographs of the imported semi-automatic firearm manufactured by the Burgu Metal Company, Turkey, and concluded that the firearm and ammunition were manufactured outside of New York State.

6. I have reviewed criminal history records pertaining to JERU BASKET, a/k/a "Wowly," the defendant, which show that on or about April 6, 2018, in Westchester County Court, the defendant was convicted of criminal possession of a weapon in the second degree, a class C felony punishable by more than one year's imprisonment. He was sentenced to five years in prison.

WHEREFORE, I respectfully request that a warrant be issued for the arrest of JERU BASKET, the defendant, and that he be arrested, and imprisoned or bailed, as the case may be.

Karma M. Smith
Special Agent
Federal Bureau of Investigation

Sworn to before me this 2nd day of March, 2024.

THE HONORABLE VICTORIA REZNIK
United States Magistrate Judge
Southern District of New York